

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 EB-08
TRSE-00 ERDA-07 COME-00 MMO-04 SIG-02 MC-02 ACDA-10
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

UNCLAS STATE 039687

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, XA

SUBJECT: US ARMS SALES POLICY

1. ADMINISTRATION IS CURRENTLY TAKING COMPREHENSIVE NEW LOOK AT OUR ARMS SALES POLICY. PROCESS IS NOT LIKELY TO BE COMPLETED FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER MONTH. MEANWHILE, IN RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES FROM HOST GOVERNMENTS ON POSSIBLE ARMS SALES, POSTS MAY FIND HELPFUL THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE ON THIS SUBJECT AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON JANUARY 22, 1977.
2. MS. THOMAS: "MR. PRESIDENT, DO YOU PLAN TO CALL A TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT MORATORIUM ON ARMS SALES ABROAD...?"
3. THE PRESIDENT: "I DON'T THINK A MORATORIUM WOULD BE THE RIGHT EXPRESSION, BECAUSE THAT IS AN ABRUPT AND TOTAL TERMINATION OF ALL OWNERSHIP. I DON'T CONTEMPLATE THAT. BUT IN OUR FIRST NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING WE DIS-

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CUSSED, IN I THINK UNANIMITY, THE NECESSITY FOR REDUCING ARMS SALES OR HAVING VERY TIGHT RESTRAINTS ON FUTURE COMMITMENTS TO MINIMIZE THE EFFORTS BY ARMS MANUFACTURERS TO INITIATE SALES EARLY IN THE PROCESS.

"THE SECRETARY OF STATE WILL BE MUCH MORE HESITANT IN THE FUTURE TO RECOMMEND TO THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT THE

CULMINATION OF ARMS SALES AGREEMENTS. I HAVE ASKED THAT ALL APPROVALS OF ARMS SALES, FOR A CHANGE, BE SUBMITTED TO ME DIRECTLY BEFORE THE RECOMMENDATIONS GO TO CONGRESS. WE ALSO HAVE ASKED VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE IN HIS EARLY TRIP AMONG OUR OWN ALLIES AND FRIENDS, SOME OF WHOM ARE HEAVY ARMS EXPORTERS, TO JOIN WITH US ON A MULTILATERAL BASIS.

"WE WILL ALSO BE TALKING TO SOME OF THE PRIMARY ARMS PURCHASERS, PARTICULARLY THE MIDDLE EAST WHEN SECRETARY VANCE GOES THERE VERY SHORTLY, TO HOLD DOWN THEIR OWN PURCHASES OF ARMS FROM US AND OTHER COUNTRIES. THIS WILL BE A CONTINUING EFFORT ON MY PART."

4. SECRETARY VANCE RESPONDED TO QUESTION ABOUT REDUCTION OF ARMS SALES BY THE US AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON JAN. 31. THE SECRETARY SAID:

"WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN TO THE POINT YET OF WHAT THE EFFECT WOULD BE ON INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES. WE ARE COMMITTED TO A BASIC PRINCIPLE AND THAT IS TO FIND A WAY TO REDUCE THE SALE OF ARMS, NOT ONLY BY THE UNITED STATES BUT BY OTHER NATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.

"THIS IS A TERRIBLY IMPORTANT ISSUE AND ONE WHERE I THINK IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAKE PROGRESS. IT IS NOT GOING TO BE EASY. INDEED, I THINK IT IS GOING TO BE VERY, VERY DIFFICULT. BUT I THINK THAT WE, AS THE LARGEST SELLER OF

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ARMS, HAVE A PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY TO FIRST PUT OUR OWN HOUSE IN ORDER, TO DETERMINE WHAT OUR POLICY WILL BE; AND, HAVING DONE THAT, THEN TO BEGIN TO WORK WITH OTHER NATIONS TO SEE WHETHER WE CAN FIND COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY THEY WILL PARTICIPATE WITH US IN DEVELOPING PROGRAMS AND POLICIES FOR CARRYING OUT THIS KIND OF A PROGRAM.

"LET ME SAY THAT SOME OF THE THINGS THAT WE ARE LOOKING AT, IN ADDITION TO WHAT OUR OWN US POLICY SHOULD BE, IS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT IT WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE TO ISSUE REGULATIONS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THAT ANY ARMS MANUFACTURER IN THE UNITED STATES COME AND RECEIVE PERMISSION FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT BEFORE THEY EVEN APPROACH ANY COUNTRIES OVERSEAS WITH RESPECT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF BUYING NEW ARMS.

"MY OWN INCLINATION IS THAT THIS IS A VERY SENSIBLE THING TO DO. IT IS SOMETHING THAT WE HAVE UNDER CONSIDERATION

AND HAVE AS YET, HOWEVER, REACHED NO CONCLUSION ON.

"WE WILL BE TAKING A LOOK, AND A CAREFUL LOOK, AT THE
VARIOUS NEW PROPOSALS AS THEY COME IN AND THEN HOPEFULLY
APPLY THE STANDARDS WHICH WE HAVE REACHED TO THOSE.

"LET ME SAY A BIT ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST, THOUGH, AND WHAT
THE STANDARDS ARE WHICH WE HAVE BEEN APPLYING TO THE
QUESTION OF SALES OF ARMS IN THAT AREA.

"WE HAVE SAID, FIRST, THAT THE ARMS MUST SATISFY OR MUST
BE FITTED TO THE LEGITIMATE SECURITY NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY
CONCERNED. SECONDLY, THAT THEY MUST BE LOOKED AT IN
RESPECT TO THEIR EFFECT ON THE OVERALL SITUATION WITH
RESPECT TO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. AND IT SEEMS TO ME
THAT THESE ARE TWO VERY FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES THAT ARE
PROPER AND SHOULD BE APPLIED."

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 22-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Enclosure: n/a
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From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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